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WARHAMMER MONTHLY

INTO THE EYE OF TERROR!

BLOODQUEST IS BACK!

DARKBLADE ⊙ INQUISITOR

RAGNOR'S ROCK

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

How long have I been trapped here? How long has it been since my sword last slaughtered in the name of Khorne? Oh, I miss the carnage of the battlefield, the screams of the dying and the thrill of an enemy vanquished. I'm bored. There is only so much raw Chaos a man can take!

Bolter stripped *and cleaned! Chainsword drill completed! Prayers said! Devotions given! Sigh! Now I have nothing left to do but float aimlessly on the tides of the warp. I'm so bored stuck out here away from my battle-brothers. I need some real action!*

Aha! What is this floating towards me? Hurrah, it's the new Warhammer Monthly! Praise Khorne, at last something to relieve to tedium... But this only saddens me further, for once I have read it, it is back to the boredom for another month. *Ooof!*

Give that here, *you unholy fool! This is a blessing from the Emperor! Finally the boredom of the Warp is over – for Warhammer Monthly is coming out every two weeks throughout the whole summer! No long month of waiting between adventures. Instead it's going to be action every two weeks! Hey, give that back, you foul Chaos heretic! Get your own!*

Next issue: SCOURGE & PURGE! – just two weeks from now!

Inside this comic...

DARKBLADE

As Malus flees from the pursing Witch Guard across the Chaos Wastes , he turns to the Orb of Malkin for help, but it seems it can only show Darkblade's death!

NEW! NEW! NEW!

BLOODQUEST

Captain Leonatos and the crew of the Exile plunge into the Eye of Terror. Beset by Warp Horrors and without their navigator, they are transported to the surface of a Daemon World. Are they now trapped forever?

RAGNOR'S ROCK

The barbarian raiders had long dreamed about the treasures which were rumoured to be hidden inside the ancient castle on Ragnor's Rock...

INQUISITOR

The Chaos-tainted Matheldas clan have mustered their forces to destroy their persecutors. They have already captured Cardinal Sarthos – will Defay and Gravier be next?

GAMES WORKSHOP

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SOMEWHERE IN THE WARP

• LETTER OF THE MONTH •

• Hail Gutspew! I have taken possession of this mortal carcass to communicate with thee. I have been monitoring all transmission from my Despoiler Class battleship "Wrath of Horus" here, deep in the Warp. I must sey I'm impressed! The snivelling curs I call my crew know this is not an easy thing! Such tales of valour and woe!! Not least of which was the maiden Ephreel Stern. Such beauty, such power – such a pity she was found to be so pure! It would have mattered not to me that she was a re-animated corpse (I know my lost mistress was). Then there is Darkblade, such singularity of purpose, such ruthlessness. I must sign off now, this puny form grows weak, and my cruisers and escorts drew near. All is Chaos, blood for the Blood God!!

— Despot Necryss, Lord of Chaos, Macclesfield

P.S. Give Baneblade a slap from me.

Nooooo! Who let this heretic win Letter of the Month? This is some treachery of Gutspew's. We'll see who does the elepping!

• How about some full sized models for limited editions? Like weapons, helmets and stuff like the Genestealer skull I saw in Inferno! once? Also maybe some three-up scale models. Limited edition comics or maybe graphic novels would be great, say one book that has all of Bloodquest in it or all of Darkblade. Just some ideas from a big fan.

— Sansarn, via email

• Prompted by the 'Enter the Black Library' article in White Dwarf, I thought I'd drop a line and show my support for the idea of an art book on the worlds of Games Workshop. I'm fascinated in particular by the rich background of the Warhammer 40,000 universe and would love to see a huge glossy tome containing artwork bursting from the seams on the shelves in the future. Take a look at books such as the 'Making of Star Trek' for the kind of thing I'm suggesting. You could include a history of how the universe and imagery has developed, with the evolution of Space Marines perhaps and include pieces from other sources such as Inferno! and Warhammer Monthly.

While I'm on the subject of artwork how about compiling all the comic strips from the first year's issues of Warhammer Monthly into one volume, a graphic novel? I haven't bought many issues of the comic because it's only 'bite-sized' but I'd certainly buy collected editions.

Finally a few months back I heard a rumour about the possibility of a Warhammer 40,000 movie, from Channel 4 or 20th Century Fox. Are they true?

Well, I'm sure I've given you enough food for thought. "And they shall paint the galaxy with the Emperor's Light."

— Mark Smith, West Yorkshire

The Black Library contains many secret tomes, including the like of those you mention. Already the Bloodquest graphic novel is complete; others will follow in due course. Rumours about a film, however, are merely the work of foul heretics.

• OK, I have been with you since issue 1, because I love comics and Warhammer 40K, and I think the stories are great. My favourite story so far was Bloodquest. It's now got me hooked on the Blood Angels. I also thought that Titan, Kal Jerico, and Inquisitor were/are great. I live in the US, but I really want that free issue that you're giving away (I hear it has the story of Cloten in it) and was wondering what it would take to get it. The UK seems to be the only place to be to get the best stuff from you guys.

— Taoz1, via email

• By the Dark Gods, Malus Darkblade must be sculpted and immortalised now! A Dark Elf possessed by a Daemon, what more could you ask for? Our paint brushes lie ready by our pallets waiting to do the Dark Ones bidding.
But seriously, for a race with so much character there is at present a distinct lack of characters available for the mighty Dark Elves. So go on, have a heart (pun intended) and get Gary Morley or Chris Fitzpatrick working on Malus ASAP.

—Stuart Woods, Watford

Verily have we beaten you to it, for the next limited edition miniature will indeed be Malus Darkblade; ordering details will be with you shortly!

Remember, the best letter will win a Black Library t-shirt. You can send heroic messages of valour in the service of the Emperor to:

Warhammer Monthly • The Black Library
Games Workshop Ltd • Willow Rd • Lenton
Nottingham • NG3 5FZ • UK

or use an Astropath to direct it through the ether via:

publishing@games-workshop.co.uk

JERICO COMPO: THE WINNERS

By the Emperor, but you're a creative lot! In the special First Anniversary comic given away with White Dwarf #232, we invited you to come up with a witty taunt for the crezed Redemptionists pictured in this scene from Kal Jerico – in return for the very last Jerico miniature or a t-shirt.

Adam Watson of Staines made us snigger the most, and his slightly surreal entry has been added to the strip.

The ten runners-up were: **Robin Adamson**, Enderby • **Jason Chie**, Larne, N Ireland • **Ben Counter**, Alverstoke, Hants • **Wayne Crennage**, Hartlepool • **Kevin Hoocy**, Beeston, Leeds • **Seamus Kennedy**, Ballinalackea, Ireland • **Michael Lynch**, Hollywood, Birmingham • **Joseph Purcell**, Basildon, Essex • **Paul Rice**, Bacton, Suffolk • **Tom Verman**, Octon, Solihull. *The Emperor's blessing on you all!*

EXCITABLE SORT, AREN'T THEY?
DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD BE GETTING OUT OF HERE?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE WORRIED THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY HIT US?

FOR MALUS DARKBLADE, THE QUEST TO RECOVER HIS SOUL FROM THE DAEMON TZARKAN IS LONG AND ARDUOUS
HIS ONLY GUIDE IS THE ORACULAR ORB OF MALKIN, WHICH PROFESSES TO SHOW THE FUTURE FOR ITS OWNER.
HOW TO PROCEED THEN, WHEN THE ORB SHOWS ONLY DEATH ?
NO ! NO ! NO !

DarkBlade

BOOK II

Part Four- Futures

Script: Dan Abnett · Art: Kev Hopgood

THE SPINE OF KARSH DEEP INTO THE CHAOS WASTES IT HAS BEEN A HARD RIDE OF TWENTY DAYS TO REACH THIS POINT
NOW MALUS TRIES TO CHOOSE HIS NEXT PATH
AND THE ORB OF MALKIN IS NO HELP AT ALL
ACCURSED THING!
I SEEK THE FUTURE IN YOUR GLASSY DEPTHS. I YEARN TO KNOW WHAT MAY BEFALL ME
...BUT ALL YOU SHOW ME IS DEATH! ALL MANNER OF DEATH NOTHING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN! NO HOPE NO PROMISE OF SUCCESS NO CHANCE!
YOU SHOW ME TORN APART BY THE WITCH GUARD THAT PURSUES ME
YOU SHOW ME SCAVENGED BY WOLVES!
YOU SHOW ME DEAD AMID THE FALLEN HOSTS OF A MIGHTY BATTLE
HAVE I COME THIS FAR ONLY TO DIE? IS DEATH SUCH A CERTAINTY?
I CURSE YOU ORB! I CURSE YOU, TZARKAN!
IF I HAVE TO DIE LET IT NOT BE HERE ON THIS FRIENDLESS WASTE LET IT BE WITH MY CHOKING HANDS AROUND YOUR THROAT!

AH WHAT SHOULD I CARE? PERHAPS I SHOULD BE HUNTING FOR DEATH PERHAPS THAT IS THE ONLY LIBERTY I'M EVER GOING TO KNOW
WHAT SAY YOU SPITE OLD FRIEND?
WE HAVE GAMELY EVADED DEATH ALL THESE YEARS SHOULD WE SEEK IT OUT NOW? SHOULD WE RACE TO ITS NUMBING EMBRACE AND TRUST IT TO LET US SLEEP EASY FOREVER?
SHOULD WE FALL PREY TO THE WOLVES? SHOULD WE FALL IN BATTLE?
WHAT SAY YOU COLD ONE? SHOULD WE TURN AND FACE THE WITCH GUARD AND MEET OUR DEATHS THERE?
DEATH IS ALL WE HAVE SPITE WHICH DO YOU PREFER?
GRRRAGH!
YOU DON'T SEEK DEATH AT ALL DO YOU COLD ONE?
THEN LET US SEE WHAT WE CAN DO.

DAWN COMES. MALUS DOES NOT TURN BACK INTO THE ARMS OF THE PURSUING WITCH GUARD.
NOR DOES HE TURN INTO THE WOLF INFESTED HIGHER SLOPES.
IN THE NEXT VALLEY INHUMAN HORDES DO BATTLE
I AM MALUS! MALUS DARKBLADE!
KILL ME IF YOU DARE!
KILL ME IF YOU CAN!

SINCE DARKBLADE'S ASSAULT ON THE ICE LOCKED ARK, THE WITCH GUARD OF BALNETH BALE HAS BEEN AT HIS HEELS
FIERCELY PURSUING THE INTRUDER WHO STOLE THE ORB OF MALKIN
WHEN THEY FIND THE INTRUDER WHO STOLE THEIR PRICELESS TROPHY THEY WILL SURELY SLAUGHTER HIM
ONWARD, WITCH GUARD! WE HAVE HIS SCENT NOW!
HE IS HERE! HE MUST BE HERE!
THERE IS NOTHING HERE ALIVE MY MASTER THIS IS A PLACE OF SLAUGHTER
THEN WE MISSED THE SCENT WE MUST FLY ON THE WRETCH WE SEEK MUST BE ELSEWHERE

ONWARD, MY WITCH GUARD! WE WILL FIND HIM YET!
AHA HA HA HA HA!
WE FOOLED THEM! WE SLIPPED BETWEEN THEIR CLAWING FINGERS!
UP, SPITE, UP!
PERHAPS THIS DAMNED ORB SHOWS US MORE TRUTH THAN WE FIRST READ
IN ITS PICTURES IT SHOWS US POSSIBILITIES, NOT FACT
WITH EACH PASSING DAY, I LEARN TO READ IT BETTER
ITS CUNNING WAYS MAY SHOW US THE ROUTE TO TZARK'N YET...
NEXT
THE GOBLIN QUEEN
DARK PRINCE.

An interview with Gordon Rennie

by Marc Gascoigne

Gordon Rennie is the writer of some of Warhammer Monthly's best-loved comic strips, including that debonair Necromundan bounty hunter, *Kal Jerico*, and of course Leonatos and the rest of the crew of the Exile, from *Bloodquest*. With the second book of the Blood Angels' saga starting in this issue (and all of the previous episodes collected as the first Bloodquest graphic novel next month!), what better time could there possibly be to talk to the man himself? And did he have plenty to say! Gordon is a full-time writer, who also produces scripts for a number of other comics, as well as stories for *Inferno!* (look out for a new case featuring the redoubtable Zavant Konniger soon). He lives with his family in Edinburgh, Scotland.

How did you get into writing comics?

Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time. That was back in 1991. I was writing reviews and features for various magazines and real proper newspapers, some of which even paid real proper professional rates. Anyway, one of them was a comics magazine called Speakeasy. Difficult as it is to believe now, the British comics industry was actually expanding in 1991 and Speakeasy was in the process of metamorphosing into a shiny new adult comic called Blast! The editor knew that all critics are really just embittered would-be creators, and asked me to submit some story ideas of my own, instead of just rubbishing other people's work. Like all the other shiny new adult comics that popped up back then, Blast! lasted about six months, but I managed to squeeze into the last issue with my first-ever comic stories: a weirdo Sherlock Holmes story, and a psycho-redneck road movie saga called White Tresh. My fledgling career was saved when both of these were picked up by an American comics company. White Trash won me a Most Promising Newcomer award from somewhere and – no kidding – a legal warning from the Elvis Presley estate. The rest is, if not history, then at least a mildly diverting anecdote.

When you were growing up, did you idolise any comic writers (did you even notice any writers)?

Um, no, not really. I was vaguely aware that, for example, the guy who wrote Judge Dredd for 2000AD wrote better stories than the guy who wrote Roy of the Rovers, but I didn't really pay much attention to the names. Not those of the writers, anyway. It's always the artists who get all the fans. That's why so many comic writers – well, me, anyway! – are bitter, twisted individuals. We sit there getting ignored at signing sessions while some knuckle-dragging artist gets all the attention. Grrrrr.

What was your first published strip?

The two I mentioned above were the first ones I ever wrote, but the first one *published* was an embarrassing little one-off that appeared in a British comic called Toxic. Interestingly, Dan 'Darkblade' Abnett was the editor who commissioned it, although he probably won't thank me for reminding me of that phase of his now world-dominating career. Mind you, neither will I, if anyone ever manages to dig up that story again.

What are you working on at the moment?

For Warhammer Monthly, it's Bloodquest II and more Kal Jerico. Lots more Kal Jerico! [More on this later.] I'm also currently working on two series for 2000 AD: a new Missionary Man series called 'The Promised Land' and a brand new future war series with the bizarre title of 'Glimmer Rats'. Very bleak and nasty; should be a good one, if I say so myself.

Do you work on American comics as well as British ones, and are there any differences between them?

Famous comics writer Alan Grant once said to me that there's as much actual plot in one of those 100-page Japanese manga stories as there is in your average 24-page US comic, and that the same 24-page US comic only has about much plot as your average 6-page story in a UK comic. I'd pretty much agree with all of that. Most UK comic writers cut their teeth doing 5-6 page stories for titles like 2000AD or WHM, so consequently their stories tend to be tighter and more disciplined. When you've only got 6 pages to tell a story with a beginning, a middle, a fight scene and a cliff-hanger ending, and still make the reader want to come back for more next issue, you tend to very quickly realise the importance of proper story dynamics. Working on US comics seems like a life of luxury by comparison: acres of pages to tell the story at its own stately pace and – gaspi – the easy-money option of just padding out the story with lots of big dynamic but minimal-dialogue splash pages.

Why are there so many Scottish people involved in comics? (Not that that's a bad thing!)

Beats me. Some people will mumble something about there being a lot of irony and black humour in comics, and those two things supposedly being particularly Scottish traits, but I think it's basically just a case of a few big names blazing a trail for everyone else. At one point, it seemed that half the population of Glasgow fancied their chances as a comic writer or artist. Or it could just be that DC Thomson, the UK's biggest and oldest-surviving comics publisher, is Scottish-based. John Wagner, Alan Grant and Pat Mills all started out there as editors, and the likes of Grant Morrison and Colin MacNeil got their start as freelancers doing things like Commando picture war stories.

Who are your favourite comic characters?

Missionary Man, because his puritanical dourness appeals to my Scottish Calvinist nature, and because he's based on Sean Connery. Kal Jerico, because he's an effete snob much like myself, and because I like his dialogue. And, though he's a short story character, Zavant Konniger, because he's another different kind of effete snob, and because I love Sherlock Holmes stories.

Other people's characters? Judge Dredd. He can't fly, he hasn't got super-strength and bullets don't bounce off him, but he's the single hardest comics character ever created; a man who absolutely will not give up, no matter the odds. The definitive Dredd moment is that scene Brian Bolland drew of Dredd and Judge Fear: 'Gaze into the face of Fear!' says the evil Dark Judge. 'GAZE INTO THE FIST OF DREDD!' says our hero, planting his fist through the creep's head. Believe me, comics just don't get any better than that.

Who's the best writer in comics today?

Judge Dredd writer John Wagner, of course. There are other writers whose work I've liked or been influenced by – Frank Miller, Alan Grant, Pat Mills, Grant Morrison, Alan Moore – but Wagner is the only one whose work has never lapsed into the occasional bout of self-indulgent drivel or general bum-inspecting. His work has a deceptively simple style – no dense character angst or purple prose inner monologues – that sometimes means you don't realise just how elegantly plotted and imaginative his stories can be. Even a Wagner script written on auto-pilot is a lesson to the rest of us in straight no-nonsense storytelling.

Is there any character you wish you'd invented?

I dunno. Probably something like Spawn or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles that went on to make their creators truly obscene amounts of money. I tell you, one hit like that, and the comics biz won't see me for dust.

And who are your favourite artists?

Despite his appalling dress sense, Karl Kopinski is my favourite artist at the moment. Current comics hotshot Frank Quitely did his first mainstream comics work with me on Missionary Man, and I got the same feeling working with him as I do now with Karl. You can see them getting better and more confident with every story they turn in, and you just wonder what they're going to do with the next script you give them. And Karl's name is cool enough that he could even be a character in a comic strip.

Do you give loads of description to control the result, or always trust the artist to come up with something cool?

Sometimes you have a very definite vision in your head of how it should be, so you just try to get it down on paper as well as you can and hope for the best. Sometimes the artist astounds you by coming up with something far better than you ever imagined and, um, sometimes they don't. Of course, it helps if you know in advance which artist is going to be working on the story, and if you've already got a working relationship with them. Then you can write to their strengths – for example, Karl Kopinski draws great action scenes and John Woo-style gunfights, while Simon Davis's artwork style looks like it's literally rotting off the page, so he's excellent for anything with undead in it – while avoiding the things that they hate or don't handle so well. You also have to bear in mind that, while it only takes a minute or two to glibly write the panel description of a scene calling for a massive battle with thousands of participants and war machines/tanks/Titans/ whatever, it'll take the artist considerably longer to draw!

Your stuff seems very cinematic. Do you always see stories in visual terms?

I've never really thought of my stuff as filmic. I've got an Honours Degree in Film Studies – honest! – but that was more about very dull French art films than anything relevant to stories about giant armoured maniacs chopping each other up with power-axes. I know that some other writers do see and write a comic strip as if it was a film, but I think that's because they're basically just wannabe-screenwriters. Comics are an interplay of words and pictures together, and writing them just as if they were static movies misses that point completely. One trademark trick that I probably overuse is running interior monologue captions in a scene, with the captions telling you something completely different from what you are seeing in the accompanying visuals. That gives you ironic counterpoint and some other clever-clever stuff that you couldn't do if you were writing it just as a film. The other half of my degree was English Literature, y'know...

But there must be films you can't help ripping... Eam, delag laspiaed ar.

Oh, loads. After four years of Film Studies I'd seen enough dull French art films to last a lifetime, so it's all mainstream action movies for me, thank you very much. Comics is an inherent rip-off medium – for example, Judge Dredd is basically Dirty Harry, and Sinister Dexter are Vincent & Jules from Pulp Fiction – so it's hardly surprising that film references turn up all the time in stories. The forthcoming Kal Jerico four-parter 'The Motheriode' opens with a bar-room gunfight that's straight out of Desperado. Then it moves into a main plot borrowed from Treasure of the Sierra Madre – a no-honour-amongst-thieves tale about a bunch of double-crossing cut-throats banding together to find a legendary lost treasure. The villain of the story is a fat corrupt Guilder called Guzman Ludd, who's basically Casper Gutman (there's even a tip of the hat similarity in the names), the character played by Sydney Greenstreet in The Maltese Falcon, which is also a story about a disparate bunch of crooks trying to get their hands on a legendary treasure.

Hey, that's me referencing not one but two classic old John Houston films, isn't it? Well, maybe those four years of Film Studies weren't a complete waste after all – and at least I'm not going for the really lazy option of just ripping off Die Hard and the latest Tarantino film. Well, not this time, anyway.

What do you tell people who'd like to be a comics writer?

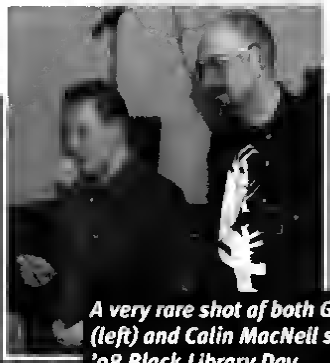
'Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.' – Don Vito Corleone. Trust me, in a freelance-based industry where your supposed colleagues will try to steal every work opportunity that comes your way, that kind of advice will stand you in very good stead. Me, I had to learn it the painful and expensive way.

And which particularly sarcastic remark do you use when people ask 'Where do you get your ideas from?'

Just the truth: I steal 'em all from other, better writers.

The first series of Bloodquest is due out shortly as a graphic novel. Do you think comics work better that way?

I've written a few things that were later collected into graphic novel format, but never anything specifically designed to be read as a complete work. It'll be interesting to see the first series of Bloodquest collected together; I think you can see the pace pick up as it goes, and you can tell that Colin MacNeil was enjoying himself tremendously by the time he got to the last three episodes and all the stuff aboard the Ork space hulk. Looking over it, I'll also see all the things I'd have done differently now. Cloten would be more to the forefront



A very rare shot of both Gordon Rennie (left) and Colin MacNeil snapped at the '98 Black Library Day

right from the very beginning. I originally intended to kill him off in part 6 or 7, but he proved so popular with everyone that he not only ended up surviving but even getting his own spin-off origins story in the special copy of the comic given away with White Dwarf! No doubt the Cloten fan cult will continue to grow when you see what he gets up to in Bloodquest II.

Aaytaiag awesome coming up ia Bloodquest booa II?

As promised at the end of the first series, Bloodquest II is set in the Eye of Terror, which is a really cool setting for any story. No one really knows what's in there, so you can just let your imagination go wild. I see that Dan [Abnett]'s set the second series of Darkblade in the Chaos Wastes of the Old World and probably for much the same reasons, so I think the second series of both these stories are going to be real fun!

In Bloodquest II, Leonatos and his Blood Angels are trapped on a mysterious Daemon World inside the Eye of Terror and they have to travel across it to find the Sword of Belarius – which is definitely on the planet, I promise – and a way back to the real universe again. They have to cross territories controlled by each of the Powers of Chaos, and there's lots of cool weird stuff [WARNING! GIVING AWAY TOO MUCH! CENSORED! CENSORED! CENSORED!] warping power of Chaos inside the Eye of Terror. Cloten gets even more [CENSORED!]!

As for real surprises, well, the first episode starts with two of the Blood Angels returning to Baal and telling the story of what happened to them inside the Eye of Terror. We won't find out who either of these two survivors are until the last episode of the series. More than that, I'm not allowed to say..

What oo you taiaa of Colia MacNeil's aatwoaa oa the seaies?

Colin and I have worked together before – we did Predator for Dark Horse Comics and Punisher for Marvel – but he really seems to be pulling out all the stops on Bloodquest. The second series is some of the best stuff I've seen him do since his work on Chopper: Song of the Surfer and Judge Dredd: America. And he doesn't even complain about all those huge battle scenes with thousands of Chaos warriors and lots of Daemons and Chaos Titans that I keep glibly writing into the story. In fact, he keeps asking for even *bigger* battle scenes to draw. Wait till he sees the big naval battle I've written for episode four – a whole bunch of rival Chaos warfleets battling it out on a sea of living blood. Hah, that'll show him!

Will theae be a thiaa book, a fouath?

Colin and I have basis of the plot for a third series, but that's a long way off yet and would probably be the last series that we can foresee at prasent. It'll be different agein from the previous series, so Colin will have to come up with yet another change of art style to match the new change of direction. At the moment, we're seeing the third series as being about the surviving Angels renouncing war and bloodshed and travelling the galaxy to spread a message of peace and cosmic enlightenment to the rest of the Imperium. Nah, just kidding! Rest assurad that whatever it's about, there'll be even mora flesh-cleaving chainsword massacres and power glove pulping of haads.

Who'd play Leonatos ia the movie? Aad aow about Kal and Scabbs?

I don't know; someone with a strong chin and good profile, so they can do all that noble Blood Angel angst. You could probably do a lot worse than Liam Neeson. He played Lancelot in John Boorman's *Excalibur*, didn't he, so we know he looks good in a big suit of armour.

The ever-foppish Kal would have to be Richard E. Grant and, since Kal and Scabbs are based on Blackadder and Baldrick – oops, another inspiration source revealed – then you might as well get Tony Robinson to play Scabbs. Either him, or Michael J. Pollard.

How did Kal come aaout?

I knew right from the start, when I was asked to submit story idaas for Warhammer Monthly, that I wanted to do a Necromunda series. It's a great setting with so many different aspects to it and, like Judge Dredd's Mega-City One, it's large and diverse enough to do all kinds of different stories in. Just looking at all the stuff in the sourcebooks – gang wars, crazed Redemptionist religious maniacs, tribes of mutie cannibals, feuding aristocratic houses, lost techno-treasure, runaway cyborg pit slaves, plague zombies, seas of toxic sludge, giant mutant spiders, hi-tech hunter-killers – instantly suggested a whole heap of stories.

All that was needed was a character to tie them all togather. An Underhive bounty hunter seemed the obvious choice, but I didn't want to do the usual grim n'gritty Clint Eastwood/Lee van Cleef character type, and I wanted to put some humour into it, because the Warhammer 40,000 universe is an otherwise bleak and cheerless place. A down-on-his-luck aristocratic fop slumming it as an Underhive bounty hunter seemed quite a funny idea and I remembered a cool-sounding name that I once wrote down somewhere as a good name waiting to find a character to match.

And that was the start of Kal Jerico, comic strip character, sell-out limited edition miniature and soon to be a major motion pictura at a multiplex near you. Well, not that last part yet, but I can dream.

Aaytaiag you'd liae to oo ia Waahammea Moathly oa Iafeano! That you've not taleo yet?

Yes! I want to do a Warhammer Fantasy pirate story. And that Battlefleet Gothic novel. And a WH40K series about the Adeptus Arbites. And something mad and manic about a bunch of Ork Fighta-Bommer pilots. And the screenplay for a Kal Jerico movie. And some Inferno! stories about that Old World bounty hunter character I was telling you editor-types about, with lots of vampires and morbid necromancer stuff in it. And— What? You think I should clear all my present deadlines before I start any of that? Oh well, I'd better get back to the script-writing then...

HE LAUGHS! OMNIA THAN THE OTHERS! BUT THEN WHO HAS AT THE MOMENT...
HELMAWR'S RUNE! BUT DON'T YOU JUST LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER
IT'S JUST THAT AT THIS EXACT MOMENT IN TIME I'M HAVING DIFFICULTY RECALLING ANY OF THEM

THE BLOOD ANGELS FORTRESS-MONASTERY ON BAAL, TWELVE YEARS AFTER LEONATOS AND HIS SQUAD OF EXILES LEFT ON THEIR BLOODQUEST
AND YOU ARE CERTAIN IT IS REALLY THEM?
THEY ARE NOT AS WE REMEMBER THEM, LORD DANTE BUT THEY ARE WHO THEY CLAIM TO BE. PSYCHIC SCANNING AND GENESEED TESTING HAVE CONFIRMED IT BEYOND ALL DOUBT
THE EXILES HAVE RETURNED HOME
AND THEY HAVE THE BLADE ENCARMINE? THEY HAVE FULFILLED THEIR OATH NEVER TO RETURN UNTIL THEY HAD RECOVERED IT?
IN TIME MY LORD
THEIRS IS A LONG TALE AND THERE IS MUCH TO BE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD BEFORE ITS END CAN BE REVEALED

WELL BLOOD ANGEL IF THAT IS TRULY WHAT YOU STILL ARE LORD MEPHISTON INFORMS ME THAT YOU HAVE A TALE TO TELL...
A TALE, LORD DANTE? AYE, IF YOU WISH TO CALL IT THAT...
A TALE OF MADNESS AND HORROR, OF SACRIFICE AND BETRAYAL OF BATTLES AGAINST DAEMONS, AND THINGS WORSE THAN DAEMONS
IT IS A GRIM TALE WITH AN ENDING THAT MAY NOT PLEASE ALL OF ITS LISTENERS, BUT IT IS THE ONLY ONE I HAVE TO TELL
AND THIS STORY WHERE DOES IT BEGIN?
WHERE ELSE COULD SUCH A STORY BEGIN MY LORD

WHERE ELSE, BUT THE EYE OF TERROR!
AFTER DEFEATING THE DAEMON-THING THAT HAD BEEN GARSHÛL THE DESTROYER, WE PURSUED ITS CHAOS MASTERS INTO THE WARP, FOLLOWING THEM INTO THE VERY PLACE WHERE WE NOW BELIEVED THE BLOODBLADE TO BE HELD--
BLOODQUEST
SCRIPT: GORDON RENNIE • ART: COLIN MACNEIL
LETTERS: FIONA STEPHENSON

WARP SHIELDS TO MAXIMUM! KEEP US HIDDEN IN THE WARP WAKE OF THE CHAOS VESSEL!
MY LORD, THIS IS MADNESS! THE GELLER FIELD IS BECOMING UNSTABLE. NO IMPERIUM VESSEL CAN SURVIVE THE FORCES WITHIN THE EYE OF TERROR. WE MUST WITHDRAW WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME!
NEVER! NOT WHILE OUR QUEST IS INCOMPLETE! AS LONG AS THERE IS A CHANCE OF WINNING BACK THE SWORD, THEN WE GO ON!
"THE GELLER FIELD THAT BUBBLE OF REALITY WHICH PROTECTS VESSELS FROM THE FURIES OF THE WARP. EVEN THROUGH ITS PROTECTIVE SHIELDS, WE COULD SENSE SOMETHING OF THE HORRORS CLUSTERING AROUND THE SHIP.
AND THEN I REALISED THAT IF WE COULD SENSE SUCH THINGS... WHAT VISIONS MUST OUR VESSEL'S NAVIGATOR BE EXPERIENCING?"
"THE NAVIGATOR, WHOSE PSYCHIC GAZE EXTENDS FAR INTO THE REACHES OF THE IMMATERIUM."

THE IMMATERIUM, WHERE THE VERY POWERS OF CHAOS LIE IN WAIT FOR THOSE WHO WOULD INVADE THEIR REALM WITHIN THE EYE OF TERROR!
ONE GLIMPSE OF THE TRUE FACE OF THE POWERS OF THE WARP WAS MORE THAN ANY UNPROTECTED HUMAN MIND COULD WITHSTAND!
SHROUD OF SANGUINIUS... HE'S DEAD!
LORD LEONATOS... THE WARP SHIELDS!
THE GELLER FIELD IS COLLAPSING! WE'LL BE TORN APART BY THE FORCES OF THE MAELSTROM!
BROTHER-CAPTAIN WITHOUT A NAVIGATOR WE HAVE NO HOPE OF SURVIVING PASSAGE THROUGH THE MAELSTROM! WE MUST DROP BACK INTO REALSPACE NOW BEFORE
TOO LATE--!

TO THE LIFEPODS. WE MUST ABANDON SHIP!
AND FACE ONLY MADNESS AND SLOW DEATH ADRIFT ON THE CURRENTS OF THE WARP?
NO IF WE MUST DIE, WE DIE HERE FIGHTING TO THE DEATH AS BLOOD ANGELS SHOULD!
WE FOUGHT, BUT IT WAS USELESS--
"NONE COULD RESIST THE POWER OF THE WARP."
ONE BY ONE, WE WERE TAKEN

ONE BY ONE, WE WERE SWALLOWED UP INTO THE DARKNESS
WHEN WE AWOKE - DAYS OR EVEN YEARS LATER, WE KNEW NOT - WE FOUND OURSELVES IN A PLACE BEYOND THE IMAGINATION OF EVEN THE MOST DAEMON-MADDENED HERETIC
HOW AND WHY THE POWERS OF THE WARP HAD SPARED US WAS A SECRET WE WOULD ONLY LEARN MUCH LATER--
AND THE SHIP AND THE REST OF ITS CREW?
NOTHING, MY LORD. I CAN ONLY ASSUME THEY WERE DESTROYED IN THE WARP
NEITHER DO WE YET KNOW WHERE WE ARE. I HAVE SENT SCOUT NOVICES PROTEUS AND LYSANDER TO FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE

LIEGE-CAPTAIN LEONATOS! COME QUICKLY--!
THAT SOUND... SOME KIND OF BATTLE!!
AND BLOOD! I SMELL THE SCENT OF FRESHLY-SPILLED BLOOD
TAINTED AND POLLUTED, TO BE SURE, BUT STILL BLOOD
OUR SANGUINARY PRIESTS GIVE US VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF DAMNATION. DAMNATION IS TO DIE WITHOUT PURPOSE TO THE EMPEROR. DAMNATION IS WHAT AWAITS THOSE OF OUR BLOOD-CURSED BRETHREN IN THE TOWER OF ADON.
I KNOW NOW THAT NONE OF THESE THINGS ARE TRUE.
"DAMNATION - TRUE DAMNATION - WAS WHAT I SAW THAT DAY WHEN I FIRST LOOKED OUT ON THE FACE OF THE PHANTOM WORLD OF STYDOLON.

YOU ASKED WHERE WE ARE, TRANIO, AND HERE IS YOUR ANSWER
LOOK DOWN THERE, AND SEE FOR YOURSELF WHERE THE CURRENTS OF THE WARP HAVE BROUGHT US TO
WE ARE ON ONE OF THE DAEMON-WORLDS WITHIN THE EYE OF TERROR. WE ARE SOMEWHERE FAR FROM THE LIGHT OF THE EMPEROR
THEN WE HAVE FAILED. WE HAVE NO SHIP AND WE ARE TRAPPED HERE. OUR QUEST IS OVER.
NO! NEVER OVER! NEVER FAILURE! WE ARE BLOOD ANGELS, SONS OF SANGUINIUS! WE DO NOT FAIL! WE DO NOT SUBMIT! AS LONG AS THERE ARE ENEMIES BEFORE US, OUR DUTY IS ALWAYS CLEAR!
THE WORDS OF A MADMAN. BUT SURELY WE WERE ALL MAD THEN TO HAVE FOLLOWED HIM INTO THAT BATTLE.
IF WE KNEW WHAT AWAITED US, IF WE KNEW WHAT HORRORS WERE STILL TO COME, I TAKE PRIDE IN KNOWING WE WOULD STILL HAVE DONE THE SAME.
TO BE CONTINUED

RAGNOR'S ROCK HAS STOOD SINCE BEFORE MY PEOPLE CAME TO THE VALLEY.
IT IS OLD. SAY THE LEGENDS OLD AS THE MOONS.
Ragnor's Rock
SCRIPT DAN ABNETT ! ART SIMON COLEBY
LETTERS GORDON ROBSON
OTHER LEGENDS SAY THE DARKEST OF THE GODS WAS BORN THERE, UNCOUNTED YEARS AGO
HIS MIDWIFE THREW HIS CAUL AWAY, AND IT BECAME STREGEN PIKE. THEY SAY HIS BIRTH SOBS STILL ECHO AROUND THE PASS.
SOME SAY THE WALLS ARE STRONG TO KEEP OUT HARM.
OTHERS SAY TO KEEP IT IN.

NO ONE HAS EVER LIVED THERE. IN THE TIME OF MY PEOPLE, NO ONE HAS EVEN BEEN INSIDE.
TODAY, WE FOLLOW TRONSA. A WEEK AGO, HIS PLOUGH BROUGHT THIS STRANGE KEY UP FROM THE FLINTY FIELDS.
TRONSA KNEW WHAT IT WAS AT ONCE. THE KEY TO RAGNOR'S ROCK.
ARE WE READY, KINSMEN?
THE SECRETS OF THE ROCK WILL BE OURS, AND THE TREASURES TOO! TREASURES LOCKED AWAY SINCE BEFORE TIME!
OUR VILLAGE WILL BE RICH!
I HAVE ALWAYS ADMIRED TRONSA'S CONFIDENCE
KLKNKK!
SHHHLUNKK!

RRMMMBLLL!
THE DARKNESS INSIDE IS CLOTTED AND OLD
THE AIR IS FULL OF DRY STAINS THAT USED TO BE SMELLS
AND DUST DUST EVERYWHERE
WE WALK - WE STUMBLE - FOR HOURS WE BECOME HOPELESSLY LOST IN THE NARROW SNAKING PASSAGEWAYS
SOMEONE STARTS TO WHIMPER ABOUT TURNING BACK
THEN AHEAD OF US TRONSA SPIES LIGHT!

WE REACH A THRONE ROOM OF SORTS, LIT BY A PALE GLOW
AS WE COME INTO THE LIGHT, I REALISE THERE ARE NOT AS MANY OF US NOW AS FIRST STARTED OUT.
TRONGA IS CAPTIVATED BY THE CROWN HE GABBLES
I WILL BE KING! I WILL BE EMPEROR LORD!
I HAVE ALWAYS ADMIRED TRONGA'S CONFIDENCE.
I'LL CROWN MYSELF NOW! HAHA!
EH?
OW! WHAT IS TH-
EEHHGGK

THE FLOOR SHAKES. HOT WIND GUSTS AROUND US. THERE IS A DEEP RUMBLE
AND I REALISE WHAT WE HAVE DONE
WE HAVE **WOKEN** RAGNOR'S ROCK.

BOOOOM!
BOOOOM!
FBOOOMMTCHH!
BOOOM!
TO ARCH-MAGOS JEHENNA FORGEWORLD KANTOS
FROM CAPTAIN ARTURIUS SEGMENTUM PACIFICUS FLEET VANGUARD
Long-range sensors have revealed extraordinary and inexplicable firestorms raging on the outland world Forthes. Previously known as a non-industrial, low technology world with an indigenous population of subsistence farmers
END.

INQUISITOR

SCRIPT *DAN ABNETT* • ART *SIMON COLEBY*
LETTERS *FIONA STEPHENSON*

THUMP!

THUMP!

THUMP-KRAK!

BOOK ONE: THE TAINT OF NICODEMUS

CHAPTER SIX

ON THE PLANET NICODEMUS, INQUISITOR DEFAY AND HIS PUPIL, GRAVIER, HAVE BEEN CALLED IN TO INVESTIGATE THE SON OF A NOBLE FAMILY WHO WAS SUSPECTED OF BEING TAINTED BY CHAOS. BUT EVENTS HAVE TAKEN A SINISTER TURN...

SO
..THE TAINTED CLAN OF *MATHELDAS* HAS SET A *TRAP* FOR ME
I HAVE JUST *ONE* QUESTION..

WHO'S FIRST?

YOU, DEFAY! YOU!
SSSHUK!
WE'LL SEE
FROM THE LIFE OF DEFAY BY HIS PUPIL GRAVIER
THE MATHELDAS CLAN WERE ALL ABOUT US, THREE DOZEN AGAINST DEFAY AND ME
FOR MONTHS NOW OUR QUEST HERE ON NICODEMUS HAD BEEN TO ROOT OUT THE TAINT OF CHAOS IN THIS NOBLE FAMILY.
– BUT NOW OUR QUARRY HAD MUSTERED ITS FORCES AND TURNED TO DESTROY ITS PERSECUTORS

OUR TRAVELLING COMPANION CARDINAL SARTHOS WAS ALREADY A CAPTIVE OF THE ENEMY.
AND WITHOUT HELP OR AID, THERE SEEMED LITTLE CHANCE OF MY MASTER AND I LIVING TO SEE THE DAWN.
KRUNCH!
KRUNCH!
MASTER BEWARE!
SHTOOM!

MY THANKS, PUPIL! YOUR AIM IS GOOD!
NOW GO! HELP THE CARDINAL! I'LL GUARD YOUR BACK
GO, GRAVIER! GO!
SHTOOM! SHTOOM!
GOOD BOY! GOOD BOY!
HURRY NOW AND WE CAN ESCAPE TO OUR TRANSPORT!
BUT MY MASTER
WHO WILL SAVE HIM?

THEN WE DIE!
ARE WE NOT SERVANTS OF THE EMPEROR? ARE WE NOT CHARGED TO GIVE OUR LIVES COMBATING THE CURSE OF CHAOS?
THIS IS WRONG CARDINAL! I MUST GO BACK!
THE INQUISITOR NEEDS ME!
IF WE GO BACK WE'LL ALL DIE!
I AM SHAMED IN COURAGE BY A MERE BOY YOU'RE RIGHT
GIVE ME ONE OF YOUR WEAPONS WE WILL GO BACK
" AND SEE IF THERE IS ANYONE LEFT TO SAVE "
IT ENDS NOW DEFAY YOUR MURDEROUS PURSUIT OF MY BELOVED FAMILY ENDS NOW!

FFFATHERRR!
BY THE GOLDEN THRONE! YASPER!
SHCHUNK!
I OWE YOU MUCH, YASPER OF FANOSS.
FOR ALL YOUR IMPERFECTIONS, YOU ARE A TRUE SERVANT OF THE EMPEROR.
TO STAND FIRM AGAINST YOUR OWN POLLUTED BRETHREN MARKS YOU WITH VALOUR AND LOYALTY ABOVE THAT OF MOST MEN.

HURT ME SO MANY YEARS, HURT ME
RID OF THEM NOW BUT INQUISITOR MUST PROMISE YASPER...
PROMISE TO DESTROY MAN WHO CAUSED ALL THIS, MAN WHO
FCHOOM!
WHAT? NO!
THANK GOODNESS WE WERE IN TIME! A SECOND MORE AND HE'D HAVE SLAIN YOU WITH THAT AXE!
YOU FOOL, SARTHOS! THERE WERE THINGS HE COULD HAVE TOLD ME
RETURN TO THE CAPITAL SARTHOS I AM WEARY OF YOUR COMPANY
GRAVIER AND I HAVE ONE LAST INVESTIGATION TO CONDUCT... AND THEN WE WILL BE FINISHED WITH NICODEMUS
FOREVER
TO BE CONTINUED

INQUISITOR WILL RETURN IN TWO MONTHS